

PATUXENT RIVER, MD – Today, Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (MD-5) delivered remarks at a change of command ceremony honoring Vice Admiral David Architzel. Vice Admiral Architzel retired today after more than 40 years of Navy service and Vice Admiral David Dunaway assumed command of Naval Air Systems Command. Below are his remarks as prepared for delivery:

“It’s hard to believe that Admiral Dave Architzel assumed command of NAVAIR just two-and-a-half years ago. But these past two-and-a-half years have been a time of great challenges for our country and, in particular, for our military – challenges ranging from the winding down of the War in Afghanistan to the continued pursuit of al-Qaeda, as well as a difficult budgetary environment.

“In his leadership of NAVAIR, Dave has made certain that our national security policies are being implemented in a way that helps us meet our challenges. Over the course of his tenure, Dave has not only held his command with distinction, but he has also earned the respect and admiration of the people here in the Pax River community.

“Since the first sailors in the first port in the first city in history, there has always been a divide between those in and out of the military who share a community. The protectors and protectees. The civilian supporters and the personnel whose base they support. The college town equivalent, as they call it, would be ‘town and gown.’ Here we might say ‘town and uniform.’

“But in Pax River, under Dave’s leadership, I believe that divide is smaller than it has ever been. Here, ‘town and uniform’ is a single phrase representing two things that go together well, not a description of things that are separate or opposed. And this is because of Dave.

“When he arrived in 2010, he found a surrounding community already strongly supporting the installation. We all know about the famous bumper stickers here that read: ‘jet noise – the sound of freedom.’

“But Dave saw as part of his mission to bring Pax River and the surrounding community closer. While NAVAIR Commander, Dave enrolled in Leadership Maryland and got out into the community to meet with individuals and organizations regularly. He made it his mission to reach out and extend a warm sense of community spirit that set the tone for a successful ‘town-uniform’ partnership.

“Dave’s leadership in supporting the workforce here was evidenced by his partnership with state and local educational institutions, and he played a special role in making sure we are building lasting relationships with public schools and colleges – especially in the area of STEM. His actions will surely yield positive results for years to come.

“The great Alabama football coach Paul ‘Bear’ Bryant once said: ‘you must learn how to hold a team together. You must lift some up, calm others down, until they’ve got one heartbeat. Then you’ve got yourself a team.’ In such a way, Dave lifted folks up when they needed lifting. And he knew how to calm down those who needed a softer touch.

“He worked tirelessly to make sure that those inside the gates and outside the gates shared one heartbeat. He made sure Pax River – civilian and military – was one team working toward the shared goal of successful operations and a strong, vibrant community. We will always be grateful to Dave for making that a priority and doing such an outstanding job of it.

“I know that Admiral Dunaway is committed to continuing that mission, and I look forward to working with him as he embarks on it. I know he and his wife, Sheryl-Marie, are already very integrated into the Pax River community.